

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910785923803321
Autore	Whitman James Q. <1957->
Titolo	The verdict of battle [[electronic resource] ] : the law of victory and the making of modern war // James Q. Whitman
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge, Mass., : Harvard University Press, 2012
ISBN	0-674-07187-5 0-674-06811-4
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (323 p.)
Disciplina	172/.42
Soggetti	War - Moral and ethical aspects Combat - Moral and ethical aspects Battles - Europe - History - 18th century Military art and science - Europe - History - 18th century War (International law) Military ethics - History - 18th century Europe History, Military 18th century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Why battles matter -- Accepting the wager of battle -- Laying just claim to the profits of war -- The monarchical monopolization of military violence -- Were there really rules? -- The death of pitched battle.
Sommario/riassunto	Today, war is considered a last resort for resolving disagreements. But a day of staged slaughter on the battlefield was once seen as a legitimate means of settling political disputes. James Whitman argues that pitched battle was essentially a trial with a lawful verdict. And when this contained form of battle ceased to exist, the law of victory gave way to the rule of unbridled force. The Verdict of Battle explains why the ritualized violence of the past was more effective than modern warfare in bringing carnage to an end, and why humanitarian laws that cling to a notion of war as evil have led to longer, more barbaric conflicts. Belief that sovereigns could, by rights, wage war for profit made the eighteenth century battle's golden age. A pitched battle was understood as a kind of legal proceeding in which both sides agreed to

be bound by the result. To the victor went the spoils, including the fate of kingdoms. But with the nineteenth-century decline of monarchical legitimacy and the rise of republican sentiment, the public no longer accepted the verdict of pitched battles. Ideology rather than politics became war's just cause. And because modern humanitarian law provided no means for declaring a victor or dispensing spoils at the end of battle, the violence of war dragged on. The most dangerous wars, Whitman asserts in this iconoclastic tour de force, are the lawless wars we wage today to remake the world in the name of higher moral imperatives.

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